THE KVUTZA

A Description of the Collective Settlement in Palestine

December 1943

INTRODUCTION.

The Jewish Community in Palestine now numbers approximately half a million. Of these over 130,000 adults are members of the General Federation of Jewish Labour (Histadruth), which was founded in December, 1920. At the date of its foundation it had a membership of 4433 (comprising almost all the Jewish workers then in Palestine), out of a total Jewish population of about 60,000.

The Federation comprises trade unions, co-operatives of various kinds (producer, consumer, settler, contractor, transport, credit, banking and marketing), together with educational, cultural and publishing institutions; it also conducts labour immigration and colonisation.

All the members of the Federation are grouped in Trade Unions, the most important being the agricultural, building, transport, food, metal, textile, chemical, railway, and port workers' unions, as well as those of the teachers, and clerical and professional workers. But workers are members of the Federation not through their unions, but directly, the Federation being a centralised union with subordinate sections.

The Federation's co-operative activities are highly developed, and cover all branches of the community's economic life: agriculture, settlement, building and agricultural contracting guilds, consumers' associations, marketing and banking co-operatives, health insurance and medical aid, etc. —all of them parts of the Federation and subject to its central authority, their work being conducted not only in the interests of their own members, but also in those of the working-class generally, and of the historic aims of Labour.

The Federation conducts the education of the workers' children, and has established a network of schools all over the country, in towns and villages, as well as educational institutions for adult workers. It devotes much attention to the spreading of the Hebrew language among Jewish labour immigrants arriving from different countries (and speaking different languages), thus welding them into a single cultural unit. The Federation also publishes Hebrew books and journals, daily and weekly papers, etc. The Labour daily "Davar" has the largest circulation of any daily paper in Palestine.

One of the most important and characteristic activities of the

Federation is its immigration and colonisation work. Only a negligible number — less than one per cent — of the members of the Federation are Palestine-born, and the whole movement is the result of immigration into Palestine in the last thirty-five years, while the majority of the members have arrived during the last ten years. The growth of the Federation is due primarily to the influx of new immigrants, which has not ceased, even during the war. In co-operation with the World Zionist Organisation, the Federation trains young prospective immigrants for work in Palestine, receives the new arrivals, sends them to work, organises them, and — so far as means are available — settles them on the land, mainly in collective settlements.

The main aim of the Labour Federation is twofold:—

(a) as a part of the World Zionist Movement, to achieve the territorial concentration of the Jewish people in its own homeland, and to build up in Palestine a modern, progressive, independent Jewish Commonwealth, based on a healthy economy in agriculture and industry, on land and at sea, capable of absorbing a growing Jewish immigration, and thus providing a lasting solution to the Jewish problem: Jewish homelessness, minority status, and the abnormal economic structure of the Jewish masses in the countries of the Diaspora.

(b) as a part of the Labour Movement, to achieve in Palestine a Socialist Commonwealth, taking part in the struggle of the world Labour Movement for the abolition of Capitalism and the establishment of a Labour Socialist society throughout the world.

Jewish Labour in Palestine was confronted from the outset with a unique task, without precedent among the Labour Movements of the world. It had to transform middle-class townsfolk into a rural working community, to bring over scattered Jews from different countries and weld them into a new national, social, economic, and cultural unity. It had to rebuild a desolate and neglected — but not empty — country under difficult political conditions, without State power, without State funds, and working entirely on a voluntary basis. It made the utmost use of the creative and revolutionary strength of a well-organised, aim-conscious Labour Community, and set itself not merely to preach a historical ideal, but to achieve it.

Apart from trades union, co-operative, and cultural work — which are to be found on more or less similar lines in other countries — there are two distinctive features of the activities of the Labour Federation in Palestine:—

(a) The education of Jewish youth throughout the world, in special organisations, called "Hechalutz" (Pioneer) Organisations, and their training in manual work, and especially in agriculture, in preparation for their new life in Palestine, where they will have to rebuild their national homeland and regenerate their people. Before the war, these Pioneer Organisations, comprising some

300,000 young men and women between 16 and 25, existed in all the countries of Europe. They still exist in England, America, and the very few European countries not under the Nazi heel.

(b) The agricultural settlement of workers in Palestine, with the financial means afforded by the Zionist Organisation and by Labour's own financial institutions, on the following principles:—

(1) National land;

(2) Self-Labour;

(3) Co-operative production and distribution.

Almost all the colonising work of the Zionist Organisation in Palestine in the last thirty years has been labour colonisation based on the foregoing principles. The land of these settlements is national property of the Jewish people, held by the "Jewish National Fund". No hired labour may be used, and the land is leased only to those prepared to work it themselves. The whole economic life of these settlements is based on mutual aid, co-operative production and distribution, association with the whole of the labour-class through the Labour-Federation, — and in most settlements — on pure collectivism. More than 20,000 Jewish agricultural settlers live in collective settlements (kvutzoth), where everything is held in common; the Kvutza is the sole owner of the means of production, as well as the only supplier of the needs of the community — not through wages, but by communal organisations for the upbringing of children, for feeding the community (in communal kitchens), and for meeting the needs of the members as in a single family. The different settlements are combined in national collective groups, all belonging to the Labour Federation. So far as their economic relations with the outside world are concerned, they buy and sell their goods through the consumers' and distributive co-operatives of the Federation (Tnuva and Hamashbir). All financial transactions are conducted through the Workers' Bank, and the central colonising association "Nir" (The Furrow).

Degania, the first communal settlement of this type, was established on the banks of the Jordan in Lower Galilee thirty-three years ago, by some twenty settlers. There are now more than 100 collective settlements all over the country, comprising some 20,000 settlers. They engage not only in agriculture, but also in industry, and they include also some wage-earners who work in private undertakings — farms or factories — paying their wages over to the Kvutza, and receiving from it their requirements on the same basis as other members. These collective settlements constitute the backbone — material as well as spiritual — of the Labour Federation in Palestine.

The training centres in the various countries which prepare young people for work in Palestine are organised on the same communal basis. In this way our young men and women are prepared, even in the Diaspora, to take their part in the double task of build-

ing up a free Jewish country and creating a model for a Socialist Labour Commonwealth.

The Federation is the largest, most influential, and best-organised group among the Palestine Jews. In the Jewish National Assembly (Assefath Hanivcharim), Labour holds fifty per cent of the total number of seats, and the Chairman of the Jewish National Council (Va'ad Leumi) is a Labour man. Labour is also the biggest group in the world Zionist Organisation, which has branches in all countries outside the U. S. S. R. — in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and America. On the Central Council of the World Zionist Organisation, Labour holds forty per cent of the seats, and on the Executive, which has its seat in Jerusalem, the Chairman, and the Heads of the Political Department and of the Treasury, are Labour men. The Labour Federation is also intimately connected with the greater part of organised Jewish Labour in the different countries, and especially in the United States of America, where the majority of the Jewish Trades Unions, branches of the Workers' Circle (Arbeiterring), Workers' Friendly Societies, etc., are organised in a National Committee to assist the Labour Federation in Palestine in all its endeavours, financially, politically, and morally.

As Jews and as workers, the Jewish Labour Movement in Palestine is wholeheartedly and unreservedly in this war against Nazi-Germany and Fascist Italy. They realise what this war means for the Jewish people, for the Labour Movement throughout the world, and for mankind in general, and are anxious to take their full share in the struggle, and to help by all means in their power — direct and indirect — towards the victory of the Allied Cause. Some 23,000 men and women from Palestine — mostly Labour men — are already serving in the Middle East, and the Labour Federation is anxious to use its whole influence not merely in Palestine, but throughout the world, and especially in America, in the same cause.

While considering the destruction of Hitlerism and Fascism as the most immediate and burning need of humanity in general and Labour in particular, the Federation is deeply concerned with the fate of the Jewish people after this war, which will not be safeguarded by victory alone. For millions of Jews the need for immigration and settlement in Palestine will be even greater after the war than before.

From a memorandum by
DAVID BEN-GURION.

FOREWORD.

"What *is* a collective settlement? Just what is this thing called a 'Kvutza'?" — This is a question which is asked by almost every visitor to Palestine — no matter what part of the world he may be from. For the "Kvutza" is a form of agricultural settlement unique to Palestine, and its exact counterpart is not to be found in any other country.

By way of reply to this oft-propounded question, we are presenting here a selection of informative and descriptive material compiled from a book and a pamphlet on this subject published elsewhere. And we hope that, after perusing this booklet, the reader will have obtained a general conception about the collective settlement, its basis and its background, its purpose and aims, its problems and its daily life. To those who may find this information insufficient, our advice is to go out to visit the settlements themselves, to stay there a while, working side by side with the settlers, and to see everything with their own eyes, — for "seeing is believing."

In addition to the Kvutza, there is another interesting form of labour colonisation in Palestine, namely, the "Moshav", or smallholding cooperative settlement. A second publication, devoted to this type of settlement, is now in the course of preparation.

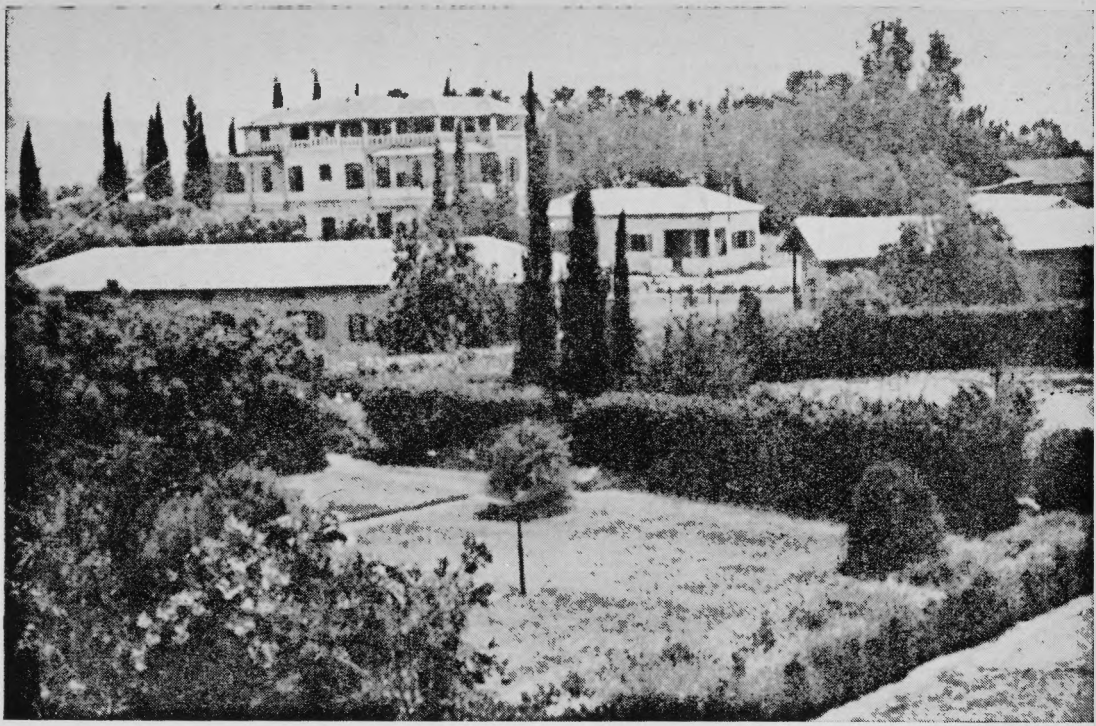
The first chapter of this booklet has been reprinted from "Collective Adventure" by M. Pearlman (William Heinemann, Ltd., London—Toronto, 1938). The succeeding sections have been taken from a pamphlet, "The Kvutza", by S. Wurm, published in the U. S. A. in 1942 by the "Habonim" Labour Zionist Youth Organisation, while the last chapter is an informal report made by a British Officer after spending a few days in the Tel-Yoseph Collective Settlement.

OUTLINE DESCRIPTION.

The Communal Settlements of Palestine are unique; they are unique not only in the modern world, but are the first of their kind in living history. Many ages have boasted experiments in co-operative living, but rarely have they developed beyond the experimental stage, nor were they successful in attracting many adherents outside the founding group. None, so far as one can gather, wove anything into the social, economic or political fabric of the country. There have been groups and associations where the members were free and equal in a vague, anarchic sort of way. But for the most part they were intended as a simple means of escape from the conventions and traditions of what is called civilised life. The basic idea was rarely anything positive; there was no new constructive code which was to govern their society. Their motivating spirit was a vague meandering desire for freedom from the traditional trappings of the old order. But there was no conscious idea and no preconceived plan as to the form the new order was to take.

A movement based on a negative idea is doomed to transience. There is nothing negative or escapist about Palestine's Communal Settlements. Their underlying philosophy is a practical socialism which they have attempted to translate into an all-pervasive co-operative life. It is a practical working out of the idea that all men have equal rights and equal privileges in society and should enjoy equal opportunities. It implies similarly that all should have equal responsibility. It insists that all have a duty and a right to work. It believes further that all should as far as possible be engaged in manual labour. Politically, the society must be a complete democracy.

But this underlying philosophy was the kernel of a far more powerful spirit which gave it momentum and driving force. This was the spirit of re-creating in Palestine a national home for the Jewish people. The idea of the Communal Settlements must be considered in this context; it is impossible otherwise to understand their existence or appreciate their success. The founders of the Collectives believed that the establishment of a Jewish territorial home would in large measure tend to solve the Jewish problem. They believed that the basic cause of anti-Semitism and of the persecution



The oldest Collective Settlement in Palestine. Degania in 1943.

of Jews in the world was Jewish homelessness. Wherever they lived, Jews were aliens, strangers. At the very best they were accepted guests. They were unable to avoid a minority complex or a sense of inferiority which manifested itself in the obvious ways. They tended to become either shy, retiring, embarrassingly modest, or else arrogant, bumptious and pretentious. They were never normal, psychologically healthy beings. No matter how it was manifested, their inferiority complex bred in their neighbours a sense of mistrust, which is the handmaid of hatred. If the Jews kept themselves to themselves and retained their own customs, traditions and conventions, they were not understood ; not being understood, they were subconsciously feared and consequently hated. And those Jews who tended to assimilate were not accepted by the native population either because of their arrogance or because of their kinship with a people who were regarded as "different". It has been pointed out, for example, that despite the conspicuous assimilation of Jews in Germany, anti-Semitism in that country was always very potent because there were constant influxes of Jews from Eastern Europe who retained their conventional dress, their long kaftans, their curled side-locks, their speech, their habits, their religion and customs. They were never understood by the German people, and even those Jewish families who had lived in Germany for centuries were either consciously or subconsciously equated with the Eastern Jews. This is by no means the whole story of German anti-Semitism, but it was probably a significant contributory factor.

The founders of the communal settlements believed the psychological factor, resulting from the absence of a Jewish home, to be the principal cause of anti-Semitism. It was by no means the only cause. But they regarded the other causes as being directly due to and conditioned by the fact that Jews had no place they could rightly call home. It was therefore their idea to re-create in their historic homeland a national home for the Jewish people. Jews the world over would be able to regard it as their spiritual home and draw that inspiration which would help revive their self-respect, give them balance, and ultimately eliminate that sense of inferiority which formed so strong a barrier between them and other peoples.

Long before the historic Balfour Declaration and the League Mandate, these idealists set forth from the countries of their birth and went to Palestine, there to lay the foundations of the Jewish Home. But they were anxious to build a home that would be worthy of the name, worthy of the Jewish people and an example to the world. They were not interested in duplicating the faults of the other countries by creating simply their Jewish counterpart. They were not out to build merely a Jewish replica of the countries which they had left. The Jewish home was to be built on the ideal of social justice which had always been the spirit underlying Jewish philosophy.

The communal settlement was to be the prototype of the future Jewish state of their dream. The present settlements differ very little fundamentally from the first one which was founded twenty-seven years ago *), except in size. The population of each settlement to-day varies from 100 to 800 **). In them, the basic principle "from each according to his capacity, to each according to his needs", is worked out practically in all-comprehensive communal life. Members give their labour to the common stock, receiving the satisfaction of their primary wants, food, clothes and shelter, and certain other wants, from the settlement. They share in all but their purely private activities with the community.

There is no private property, tenancy of the land and ownership of the settlement's property being collective. Members thus own nothing, but, being partners in the community, have a right to everything. There is no money in circulation within the settlement; there is no need, since a member, by virtue of membership, is granted his principal needs. Naturally, both members and the settlement itself in economic relations with bodies or persons outside the settlement use money.

All work within the settlement is on an equal footing. There is no social, economic or political privilege enjoyed by particular workers. The scavenger and the doctor have the same rights. This is also true of the sexes, men and women being treated as equal members in the community. Members marry and have children and their family pattern is the same as ours in England, except that certain functions which in England are regarded as the prerogative of the working-class family are, in the settlements, the charge of the community. For example, cooking, the preparation and serving of meals, laundering, repairing clothes, the care of children are the affairs of the settlement and arranged for communally.

The government and administration of the communal settlements are democratic. Ultimate authority is vested in the general assembly, which means all members in general meeting. All questions of major issue are considered and decided at a general meeting. All members attend and have the right to vote. The procedure usually followed in voting is an open show of hands; but should some members prefer to record their opinion on some vital issue secretly, voting is, by secret ballot. This, however, is exceptional, as the most important decisions over which personal conflict may arise are those governing the appointment of the key settlement position. And it is a fact, surprising to the visitor, that there is rarely any disagreement among members over the choice of their executive administrators. The nominations are nearly always un-

*) Degania, founded in 1910.

**) Some settlements number now over 1200 population.

animous. The difficulty often lies in persuading the nominees to agree to take up the position.

There is no "head" of the settlement; the administration is in the hands of the executive committee, secretary and treasurer, who are elected by the general assembly. Either the secretary or a member of the executive committee presides at general meetings. The members also elect separate committees for each branch of the social and economic activities of the settlement. Most settlements thus have committees governing labour, financial affairs, defence, personal needs of members, cultural activities and adult education, children's education, entertainment and health. Where there is deadlock over some issue within a committee the matter is referred back to the general assembly, and if the issue is of major importance and is the subject of much controversy, decision is taken by referendum in which all members take part.

The economy of the communal settlement is carefully planned. In planning, account is taken not simply of the most profitable activities to be pursued and the best methods to be applied, but also of the labour needs of settlement members. Naturally, they are interested, say, in putting the land to the most profitable uses which will enable it to support a maximum population. In doing so, they have regard to fundamental principles of the settlement which include, among others, the principle of equal privileges for men and women which gives woman the right to a career. The settlement must therefore make provision for certain types of agricultural labour suitable for women. I remember being present at a general meeting of a settlement at which they discussed the most suitable plantation for a new piece of land which had just become available. Although to an abstract employer it might have been more profitable to put it under citriculture, it was finally decided to turn it into a tree nursery, since it created possibilities for agricultural labour of a kind most suited to women, and there was a dearth of such labour possibilities in the settlement. Their economic planning takes account of social factors.

This is not meant to imply that their economic planning is shoddy. They compute down to the last details — in so far as this is possible in an agricultural economy — the likely returns of their crops, and the amount that is to be allocated for buildings private and communal, defence, clothing, food and entertainment. The statisticians of the settlements, in conjunction with those responsible for each branch of economic activity, keep careful track of the income and outlay of these branches. It is possible, for example, at any particular moment of time, to compare, by statistical graphs, the average yield of a chicken with the cost of its food. Their organisation compares favourably with that of the most efficient of modern farms.

The agriculture of the communal settlements usually takes the form of mixed farming. Naturally their activities vary with variations in climatic and geographical conditions. The abundance or paucity of water has also a significant effect on the nature of their farming. Broadly speaking, the settlements go in for dairy farming, sheep-rearing and poultry farming, growing of wheat, clover and alfalfa, citriculture, plantation of vineyards, olive groves, orchards, tree nurseries, vegetable gardens and flowers. In the Jordan Valley, the settlements go in for banana and date plantation. Most profitable where there is water, and in many settlements the staple activities, are dairy farming, citriculture, and the plantation of vineyards and bananas.

Like most farming communities, the settlements obtain credits from banks and various national institutions against their harvests. Their produce is marketed by co-operative distributing companies which handle the produce of all the settlements and sell it in the open market. For dairy produce, special stations are established at central points near a number of settlements, milk being collected twice a day and distributed in the towns. For other produce, temporary collecting stations are established during the particular harvest.

Where, at the end of the year, there is a financial surplus, a settlement may decide, after allocating a certain percentage to reserve, to raise the standard of living by increasing the quantity or quality (or both) of food, raising the allowance on clothes, making a more generous contribution towards the entertainment allowance, or building more houses; or it may decide to maintain the same standard of living and absorb more members, since they regard it as essential to increase to the maximum the possibilities for supporting a large number of members. It has been my experience that settlements, tend to be so self-sacrificial as to decide almost invariably on the latter, preferring to raise their standard of living slowly and afford shelter to new immigrant Jews.

Membership of the settlements is of a heterogeneous character. The members of the settlements are Jews who have come from many different parts of the world, notably from Russia, Poland, Roumania, Germany, Czechoslovakia, South Africa and United States, and, some months ago, the first batch of English men and women went out. They are people with different languages, different social background, different habits and conventions, and accustomed to different standards of life. In the settlements they become a single integrated group, speaking a common language, Hebrew, and living the same life. It is remarkable how quickly they throw over their immediate past histories and how rapidly they assimilate in these minor social melting-pots, united by the single purpose of building up a Jewish National Home on ideal lines.

What do the Communal Settlements look like? From a

distance they appear like oases in a veritable desert, green fields and groves taking the place of the traditional date palm. Dotted about the countryside lie snug little nests, in which are to be found concrete and wooden buildings, clustered together in close concentration. You travel a few miles along a broad valley bounded on either side by a range of hills, strong, reddish, three-dimensional hills whose colours change from one minute to the next with the movement of the sun. The actual valley itself is nothing but brown sun-scorched, barren desolation, but every few miles it is relieved by patches of green which closer examination reveals to be the cultivated groves of a communal settlement. The settlements seem so solitary and isolated, and so much in contrast to the surrounding wilderness that one imagines them somehow to have been left untouched by what must have been a tornado or some other natural disaster, whereby the rest of the country had been ravaged and reduced to waste. It is difficult to believe that at one time, and not such a long time ago, the rich flourishing verdant settlements were as derelict as the wilderness in which they are set, and that their creation and not the destruction of the surrounding countryside was responsible for the surprising contrast.

If you visit one of the more developed and longer established settlements you walk up the approach to come wide-eyed upon a series of modern angled concrete buildings, interspersed by well-laid-out lawns and coppices, the whole looking rather as if it had been taken off the cardboard stand of an architect's model. One large, squat, onestoreyed building, the dining-room, attracts conspicuous attention because it is often the largest, is situated usually in the centre of the settlement, and is, in the majority of cases, the most pleasing architecturally. It is by far the most important building in the settlement, since it is the most used. It is a kind of central club-room. Members congregate there at meal-times. They also often meet there just to talk and drink (nothing stronger than Russian tea). All important notices and instructions are displayed on the notice-board of the dining-room. It is a regular ritual to glance at the board before sitting down to eat. Most general meetings are held in this room, which is also used, where no special building is available, for lectures, concerts (if it is impossible to hold them in the open air), dances and various kinds of indoor games from chess to ping-pong.

Another large building which attracts attention is the crèche and nursery school. This is usually a plain, concrete, two-storeyed building with large playing rooms and nurseries, one or two small dining rooms, kitchens, bedrooms and bathrooms. In the average settlement, the crèche and kindergarden occupy the same building, the latter on the ground floor and the crèche on the first floor. In the larger settlements, each may occupy a different building.

Near-by are rows of long, one-storeyed detached concrete houses, each surrounded by a neat, well-kept and carefully tended garden, rich with a variety of multi-coloured Mediterranean flowers. The gardens are tended by the occupants of the house. Between the rows of houses are large lawns, green, fresh-smelling, specially bordered by palms which offer a cool shade. They are most restful and refreshing on a hot afternoon after the day's work.

The rooms in the houses — a married couple have one or two rooms — are not elaborate, but they are furnished neatly and with taste. They are, of course, required only for resting, sleeping and private entertaining. A divan, a table, a few chairs, a bookcase and wardrobe cupboard, mostly executed in the modern style, adorn most rooms. Other appurtenances such as pictures, a more grandiose divan cover, more expensive curtains, or a gramophone are to be found in some rooms, usually presents from friends or relations. While I have seen some rooms in which one may do little more than sit or sleep, I have seen others which compare very favourably with those of a well-to-do middle-class intellectual in London.

Since building does not keep pace with immigration, many members have to live, in the interim period, in wooden bungalows. They are strictly functional in the sense that the rooms have four walls and a roof. Some, however, are quite comfortable and are often furnished in the same way as the concrete houses. The concrete houses are usually reserved for members who have been longest in the settlement, children and adolescents, and for members who may have joined only a short time before, but who need special care. Naturally, in the younger and poorer settlements, the majority of the members live in wooden bungalows.

There are settlements where even the construction of these bungalows has not kept pace with housing needs. Some members have therefore to live in tents, usually two persons sharing one large bell-tent. It is remarkable how well they have accommodated themselves to canvass; furnished with a divan, a chair, table, and small bookcase, there is little room left to move about, but the effect is highly pleasing. Some have planted small gardens round the tent which produce a gaily decorative effect. In one of the more progressive settlements one of whose economic activities was the manufacture of tiles, the tents were set upon a cement foundation with a tiled floor! In summer the housing problem is not so acute, as the tents offer adequate accommodation of a not unpleasant character; in winter, however, tents are most unsuitable, rendering the occupants liable to rheumatism. During the rainy season, the tents are evacuated, the occupants swelling the number of persons per room in the houses and bungalows.

The communal building near the dining-room is usually the library. The building, furniture and number and variety of its

volumes vary with the wealth of the settlement. In some settlements, the library is a wooden shack with a few forms and long tables, a limited number of books and just a few periodicals and newspapers in Hebrew. In others, the library is a magnificent concrete building, with many comfortable chairs, a diverse collection of volumes in many languages as well as an international variety of magazines. In one settlement whose members were drawn largely from America, the library had every American and English magazine of note, such as the *New Republic, New Yorker, Cosmopolitan* and the English *New Statesman* and *Spectator*. These were in addition to the regular periodicals in Hebrew and German, which most settlements stocked. This incidentally gives an interesting insight into the type of person who joins the settlements. A man may usefully be judged by what he reads.

The lavishness of the music-room also varies with the wealth of the settlement. Most magnificent, however, was the music-room in Chugim, one of the poorest settlements. It looked indeed like the music-room of some fashionable Victorian mansion, with its grand piano — a gift from a wealthy and sympathetic visitor — its polished parquet floor, rich carpet, and furniture to match. It had a sliding wall which could be shot back to enable open-air concerts to be held. The impressiveness of these concerts was given added solemnity by the historic memories of its site which was close to the celebrated Gideon's Spring, where, legend has it, Gideon chose his army of 300 men from the thousands of his raggle-taggle followers by discriminating between those who, like animals, drank straight from the spring and those who cupped their hands and drew the water.

But lavishness is not everything. I have seen members of a settlement listening with rapt appreciation to gramophone records though seated on hard wooden benches in a bare wooden hut which constituted their music-room.

The needlework shop, bootmaking shop, laundry, storehouse, secretarial offices all are in the outer segment of the village, and are usually wooden structures. In addition, the settlement has the same outhouses, sheds and stables that are to be found on any large farm.

Surrounding the village are the cultivated fields and groves of the settlement, and they do indeed provide a startling contrast to the adjoining land. It is difficult to believe that the small green patch midst a sea of barren desert was at one time not any different from the neighbouring land. The average visitor seeing the conspicuous disparity between Arab and Jewish cultivation immediately concludes that Jews have settled in the best and most cultivable areas. He cannot understand that, twenty years before, these parts were as derelict as are the present barren tracts which predominate

in Palestine. It is only by their initiative and energy that the Jews have rendered their area cultivable. Wherever they have settled, they have made intensive discoveries of water. They have conserved rainfall, they have made artesian borings, they have canalised river water for irrigation purposes — and water is the clue to agricultural settlement in Palestine. Where water is scarce, a communal settlement may require something like 600 acres to support a population of 100. This number may be maintained in a settlement of only 150 acres situated near a plentiful water supply. Incidentally, where a settlement has made a successful artesian boring, the water is made available for the neighbouring Arab village. This is by no means the least significant reason for the marked friendly relations which exist between the Jews in communal settlements and their Arab neighbours. Even at the height of the disturbances, I continually came across Arabs from near-by villages watering their flocks in the irrigation canals of the communal settlements in which I stayed.

The standard of life in the settlements varies largely with the length of their establishment. For the first few years the standard is low, and the settlers have to make serious sacrifices. They work very hard, are forced to spend on capital rather than on consumption goods, suffer poor housing conditions, inferior quality food — and then only a limited amount — and a curtailment of luxuries and entertainments. Each year, however, brings a rise in their standard of life, so that after about five years, broadly speaking and taking all things into account, it may be said to be as high as that of the lower middle class of this country, computing it on the basis of their standard of clothing, housing, food, care of children, education and health services, leisure and entertainments. An important item which sends up the cost but also the standard of living is the education and care of the children. It is doubtful whether the trader or skilled artisan of this country could afford to bring up his children in the same way as the communal settlements. It is certainly impossible in the case of the agricultural labourer, and it is really with the standard of life of the agricultural labourer in other countries that the settlement standard should rightly be compared. There can be little doubt that the standard in the settlements is infinitely superior.

I was much amused on one occasion by a conversation I had with one of the British troops who visited a settlement at which I was staying during the disturbances. After a long discussion as to whether the communal settlement system could be introduced into England, he exclaimed quite seriously: "But, my dear fellow, it could never work in England; the members would go crazy if they couldn't go and have one when they wanted. " To him, one could not even begin to talk of a standard of life without public houses!

Most of the agricultural labourers I have met in this country, and not only agricultural labourers for that matter, have often had to choose between beer, cigarettes and a decent meal. In the settlements they are not beer-drinkers. They have different tastes and different criteria of enjoyment. They prefer to spend perhaps less on food and clothes and more on their children, on books and concerts. The difference in emphasis on what they consider to be their vital needs does not make their standard of life lower than their opposite numbers in this country. Rather is it clear that, reduced to a common basis of actual benefit and enjoyment, their standard is infinitely higher than that of the English working class.

Nowhere in Palestine are distances from one place to another very great. The country is itself no larger than the size of Wales. The settlements are therefore within easy reach of a town. On a member's free day, he may wish to visit a friend or relative in town. The settlement provides the necessary funds for the excursion. Naturally it would be a heavy drain on the settlement's resources if this were done too often, but I have known members spend a week-end in town as often as once in two or three weeks. No matter where I travelled, by train or coach, from north to south, east to west, I always found a large number of members of communal settlements among my fellow-travellers, and they were always conspicuously numerous in the workers' restaurants of Haifa or Tel Aviv. Whenever I met any members in town and paid for their meals, they would use their food allowance to buy cigarettes of a kind more expensive than that to which they were accustomed in the settlements and give their comrades a treat when they returned. The cigarette problem is difficult in some of the younger settlements which have to ration their distribution. But even in the older settlements, where members receive as many cigarettes as they wish, they are always of a very inferior quality.

Incidentally when members wish for any of the necessary "luxuries", all they have to do is pay a visit to the storehouse-keeper. In one typical settlement I know the storehouse is open every morning and on three evenings a week. In appearance it is just like a vast shop which seems to stock everything, the only difference is that members get their goods over the counter without having to pass any money in exchange. Soap, tooth-brushes, tooth-paste, razors, blades, shaving-brushes, pens, pencils, paper, cigarettes, matches, ash-trays, oil-lamps, string, contraceptives, all are doled out with magnanimous gratuity by the lord bountiful, the storekeeper. Naturally, if a member comes in asking for a razor when he has been given one the previous day, his demand is queried. Or if a member asks and gets, as I remember one did, for a new lamp-glass on six consecutive days, the storekeeper may get a little huffy and mutter grumpily about butter-fingers. But there is no red tape,

nor is any "means test" applied. In general, a member simply has to ask for any commodity stocked by the storehouse to obtain it. There is obviously little point in asking for more than they require, just as there was no need for the Israelite journeying through the wilderness to collect more manna than he could eat.

Members do not even require money to buy stamps. They place their letters in the letter-box, and one of the members in charge of mail collects, stamps and posts them. Members may, of course, write as many letters as they please, though I remember a case of one settlement which had to impose a restriction. It had just accepted thirty young boys and girls aged about fifteen from Germany. Being young and the first time away from home, they had nostalgia for the old country and their families. They used to come in from their half-day's work and rush straight to the writing-desk. The additional cost of sending something like 180 more letters a week — they would write home every day — was so great that they were gently asked to limit the indulgence of their Victorian habit to twice a week!.

It is clear that some members "earn" more than others, by smoking more, using more soap, breaking more glasses or writing more letters. This factor is, however, of small consequence. A non-smoking member does not come whining to the storekeeper for more razor-blades to make up for the cigarettes he does not smoke. It is equality of opportunity rather than a rigid equality of personal property that is vital. To understand their society and the principles upon which it is based it is necessary to adjust our intellectual focus. Their perspectives are not ours. To judge them we may use our own criteria; to understand them we must use theirs.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE COMMUNITY.

Social regulations in the kvutza *) are intended to enable everyone to enjoy fullest equality and opportunity. The freedom of a single individual begins to be limited when it encroaches upon the similar freedom of another. No formula can give an adequate description of social interaction in the kvutza. The collective has eliminated the individual economic struggle as a determining factor of personal relations. Adverse economic conditions of the group may, to be sure, affect the relations of members to the collective, but the history of the kvutza has proved that, by and large, unfavourable relations between members do not arise from economic causes. Friction develops as a result of the slackening of the collective ideal, improper personal inter-relation of individuals or from purely psychological causes. The emancipation of the individual from the competitive struggle and everything it implies is undoubtedly conducive to a refinement of mutual relations. Absorption in daily work does not very often leave the individual free for the luxury of developing a "problem personality." Mutual relations are adjusted spontaneously by the control of the common interest in the collective ideal.

It is generally assumed that the individual is not only enriched in experience through the struggle for existence but that he is also given incentive through competitive activity. It is further assumed that the individual, by struggling alone, must bring into play all of his potentialities, thereby gaining in personal strength. It is believed that character is molded only by individual experience with adversity. Because of this viewpoint, there were times when no one, except for the members of the collectives and a handful of sympathizers, believed in the ability of the kvutza to survive. The opponents of the kvutza often asserted that it would stifle the incentive of the individual and would blunt his sense of responsibility towards property. Not all kvutzot, of course, can boast of success. Some of them have suffered because of social or political reasons. Almost none of them suffered in the slightest from any social or

*) The Hebrew name for Communal Settlement.

economic delay arising from lack of incentive or lack of fullest co-operation.

Trotzky, who was in charge of the Russian collectives in the early days before large-scale collectivization, felt compelled to introduce a system of rewards. He frequently found an appalling lack of general respect for public property. His rewards were intended to serve as an incentive to work and to social consciousness. In Palestine too there were those in whom the principle of private ownership was so deeply imbedded that they demanded that buildings in the kvutzot be so erected as to serve as individual homes after the kvutzot are dissolved and its members renounce the principles of collectivism. The expedient of rewards has so far been found unnecessary and the principle of private ownership has not in any degree penetrated the kvutza.

While there were a great many errors of inexperience during the upbuilding of the kvutza, and while there was an attendant waste of human energy, the kvutza is indubitably a *fait accompli.* Accumulation of experience has since lightened the burden of the budding kvutzot and has given them a course by which to steer. Diversification and stabilization have strengthened and justified the general feeling of responsibilty and devotion.

The greatest single factor in the continued development and spread of the kvutza movement in Palestine, against physical and ideological hardship, can be summed up in the single Hebrew word *chalutziut* (pioneering). The concept *chalutziut* is packed with implications. It is a generic term embracing the spiritual, ideological, economic and even religious drive behind the movement for the healthy regeneration of an oppressed nation. What Zionist doctrine is to the world Zionist movement, what the great national funds are to Jewish national economy in Palestine, *chalutziut* is to the actual physical return of the Jewish nation to its traditional soil. The idealistic energy against the background of the actual crumbling of Jewish positions in the diaspora was the force which enabled an urban and crippled people to exert its fullest energy in the face of almost insurmountable obstacles. The saga of the chalutz deserves its place beside the pioneering of any nation striking its roots in new earth.

Pecuniary reward, which constitutes one of the most powerful incentives in the competitive world, is replaced in the kvutza by social reward. Gratitude for devotion and achievement is not absent in the kvutza but it is not manifested through tangible material things. Competition is not eliminated but the community stimulates the desire to sublimate it or direct it into socially constructive channels. Reward has no relation to exception from duty or to privilege.

Unskilled labour is never regarded as humiliating and, there-

fore, skilled and unskilled worker alike are occasionally assigned to it. This evaluation is utterly and organically an accepted truth. The routine work in the kitchen is one of the unskilled tasks assigned by rotation. The equal dignity of all labour is successful only when there is a general realization of the equal utility of all labour. Permanent self-education and group-feeling safeguard against an aristocracy of function.

The kvutza has reduced the dependence of one individual on another to a minimum. At the same time, it has intensified the interdependence of the group. It has linked its membership closer together than any other form of society has done through proximity of dwelling, comradeship, common dining, labour, education, common suffering and joy. In an individualist society the question of personal relatibns between individuals does not occupy such a socially important place as it does in the collective. In an individualist society the contact between individuals is not so close and, hence, there is less cause for conflict.

But in the kvutza with its daily contacts limited to a small group of people, conflict of personalities is very likely to occur. The whole kvutza is unable to intervene in cases of a purely personal nature. Individual behaviour must be controlled by individuals. The elimination of personal friction depends however upon the ability of the society to cultivate a complexity of cultural relations and social ties between its members. The unity of the group depends upon the evaluation of individuals regardless of faults and weaknesses, abilities or disabilities, as men who contribute their share to the building of the community. Caution and self-control are eminently necessary, and persons gifted with a high degree of social character are quick to find happiness in the cooperative form of life. Others must overcome personal conflict. It is evident that the kvutza develops smooth communal living as its individuals develop the necesary personal qualities.

Paradoxical as it may seem, the best members of the collective are very often those who are able to live independently on a personal plane. The socially-minded are not necessarily good members. Sociability requires polish, adaptability and a certain adroitness of speech, which does not always indicate high personal qualities, though it does not necessarily preclude them. Because of the compactness of the community, a reasonable distance between individuals is perhaps desirable. Then too, introverted natures are psychologically better able to work toward self-protection and hence toward the perfection of community life. Sociability in kvutza life is a lesser safeguard against the danger of social snagging than a limited preservation of personal boundaries. Personal collision is far more serious in a small community than in a metropolis and, on this account, the problem is a weighty one. The kvutza cannot, there-

fore, be considered merely as an intimate group of friends — intimacy may not survive adversity. The kvutza is a society based on objective social values.

This should not be taken to mean that the kvutza is not a network of complicated social groups. The community of interest and the personal propinquity is comparable only to a family or to a very close circle of friends. Relations in the kvutza, to be sure, are conditioned by an objective social ideal. Friendships, therefore, are not based upon reciprocity of favours or services in a tangible way, but upon a plane of spiritual disinterestedness. Friendships are not exposed to the buffets and tests of the individualistic world but are based rather upon thorough knowledge and mutual appreciation gained by continuous and close contact. But on the other hand the very intimacy necessitates a greater depth of character. Friendly groups constitute concentric circles very likely to enrich the life of the collective.

Altogether the problem of personal relations is quite complicated. People are prone to judge their neighbours by their faults rather than by their virtues. In a limited society there is a strong temptation to subject one's neighbour to a critical analysis. On the other hand, the pressure of comformity acts to file off many a sharp edge. Strong characters, of course, rise above the procrustean bed of conformity; weaker persons may succumb. The kvutza is a brotherhood of the strong and the weak and the average. How this brotherhood operates depends on the ability of the kvutza to stimulate and further the constructive side of human character at the expense of the destructive side.

One of the leading figures of the kvutza movement thus defined the cause of social decadence: "Along with the rise of a feeling of inferiority and the absence of a sense of purpose, cultural needs proportionately diminish. Something must alleviate boredom where the future is obscure. In such a case people become either mystical or satirical and the cabaret becomes their favorite diversion." In the kvutza, too, when the goal is obscured there is the danger of internal disintegration. In everyday life not everyone can be mindful of ultimate ideals. A multitude of petty things can constitute an infectious irritation. The membership of the kvutza is complex. The members are products of many different environments and their past circumstances as well as psychological differences are bound to create conflicts. The cunning of the weak, the primitivism of the crude, the ignobility of the unprincipled are under a greater social control in the kvutza which calls forth a greater measure of self-control. In individualist society one is able to unload his resentment outside his immediate circle. In the kvutza this negative energy, craving for an outlet, must be controlled and neutralized lest convention throttle community life and lest gossip and defamation poison the creative springs.

The amount of freedom which kvutza members enjoy in work and in social relations enables them to cope with the shortcomings and weaknesses inherent in human nature.

There are some, who, for various reasons, leave the kvutza after a time. It was never expected that the cooperative community would serve all men. The bulk of the membership, however, remains with the group. This may be accounted for on the basis of pure self-interest. Most of the members know just how much they are likely to attain and how difficult would be their struggle in the great anonymity of the cities. Many of them have gone through at least one period of unemployment. They know that cultural opportunities in individualist society are not always comfortably attainable and they realize how incomparably greater are the possibilities of personal protection in the warmth of a group. Knowing these things, if there is no driving force that compels them, they are unwilling to go out into the great outside. Thus, apart from adherence to the kvutza as an objective idea, it is enlightened self-interest that brings the individual into the fold of the collective and keeps him there.

Two workers were once roommates in a hospital in the Valley of Jezreel. They had been there for quite some time. One of them was a member of a kvutza, the other was a private farmer. The latter was perpetually worried over his neglected farm, over his newly accrued expenses, over the manner in which his family had to live because of his illness. To top it all he had to return immediately to all the hard work which had accumulated during his absence. The kvutza member was not persecuted by such restlessness. He was certain that the others were taking care of everything and that his duties were a light burden on so many shoulders. Having no finances, he had no financial worries of his own, and his family, as members in their own right, were well cared for. Moreover, he knew that his comrades would not expect him to return to hard work immediately, but that he would gradually assume his old tasks as his strength returned. In other words, he felt utterly protected by his community. He had what is generally termed social security, in its deepest and truest meaning.

Since the beginning of the disaster of Polish Jewry many of the kvutzot were brought face to face with a grave social-economic problem. Many of the members had parents who had suffered complete ruin. Naturally these members wanted to come to their parents' aid and it was natural that they should think of leaving the kvutza in order to earn money with which to do so. The kvutza, however, could on principle not allow its members to have personal economic problems, since the collective is supposed to be in itself the solution. Accordingly, many thousands of dollars were sent abroad even at the expense of the economic security of the collec-

tives. In a great number of cases the parents were taken into the kvutza. Naturally, this service placed a heavy economic burden on the group. The housing problem was thereby greatly aggravated, sometimes even forcing the members involved to leave their more comfortable quarters to the parents. But on the whole, the group was determined to do its duty by the individual.

On this account it becomes clear that benefits derived by some individuals far exceed those of others. The kvutza is not built upon the principle of equality of the wage-earner. The needs of the individuals are not equal but everyone has the equal right to demand that certain fundamental needs be satisfied by the kvutza entirely apart from the consideration of equal sharing. What is true of material needs is also true of spiritual ones. The kvutza, within the limitations of reason and means, often finances study and training for those members who are gifted. This is regarded as a normal procedure.

A certain over-zealousness was characteristic of the kvutza in its early days. Communal living was thought to be complete community control of every single bit of property. This included even the most personal items of clothing and there was as strict control over these as over farm implements and other supplies. As the kvutza matured it became obvious that such an extremism was not at all necessary. Today, each individual has a certain minimum supply of wearing appeal which is his own. In some cases only work clothes are public property but even this is rare. Almost all communities have realized that clothes and their care are a matter of individual choice. As for the women to whom these matters have an almost traditional importance, at the beginning of each season they consult with the woman in charge of clothes who shows them a variety of materials, patterns, and styles. After the miniature "fashion show" each can choose the style which meets with her particular standards of taste. It has not been found that this compromise with individualism has marred the collective ideal. The old fear that the private ownership of any belongings might introduce the germ of acquisitiveness was stilled only after a degree of social maturity was reached.

CARE AND EDUCATION OF THE CHILDREN.

From the very day of their birth, children are a community responsibility. Though in some kvutzot children spend the night in the quarters of their parents, most kvutzot have developed a communal system extending even to overnight care. They spend all of their time in the nursery and, when they have outgrown it, they are transferred to the children's community. In either case,

they are cared for by responsible, often specially trained persons. The children's home is a kind of state within a state and its regimen is planned by those who work with the children in conjunction with a committee of parents or responsible elected individuals. Very careful tending and hygienically scientific nursing have raised the health standard to an enviable height and reduced mortality to a minimum. The mortality rate among the children in the kvutzot ranks with the child mortality rate of New Zealand, i. e. among the lowest in the world. Considering the difficult climate, this is undoubtedly a very great achievement. A very high number (one worker to three children) of persons engaged in caring for the children is responsible for this measure of success. The kvutza has, however, insisted upon sparing nothing to achieve it.

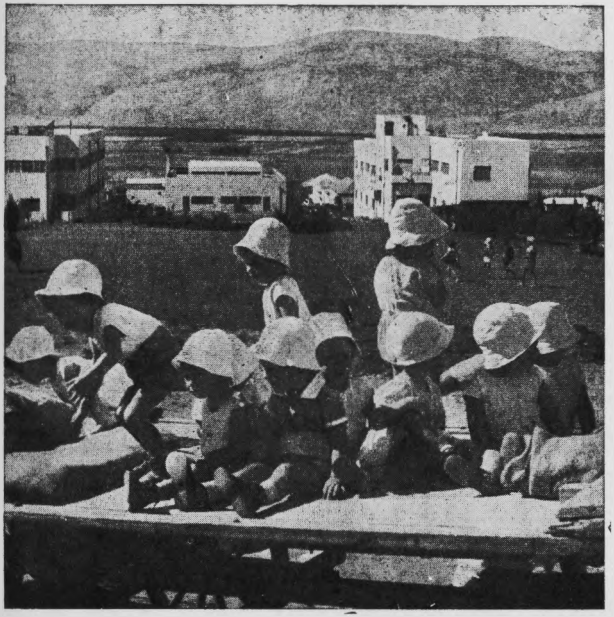
Care and education of children is so vital a concern that there have been cases of grave social crisis because of divergence of opinion on these questions. The stumbling-block has always been the question of parental control as opposed to social control. It has been acceded that care during the day should be left to the specialists, but there were many who wanted their children to be with them in the evenings and during the nights. These maintained that nothing can replace the depth of maternal love, that strangers must not be permitted to usurp the place of the parents, that the subtle relationship between child and parent must not be disturbed.

On the other hand, those who argued for complete community control of children by appointed experts were stimulated by their intense desire to keep out everything that smacked of private ownership or private authority. They were contemptuous of the romanticism of family life with its authoritarian principle. Admitting that the relinquishing of children to the care of strangers is a great sacrifice on the part of the parents, they pointed out that the collective way of life aims at eliminating the animal element from human relationships. They demanded that the principle of complete material and educational equality be applied to children, too. The children, they said, have to be imbued with the spirit of collectivism. They must be spared the pain of adjusting themselves to the demands of the collective. As a matter of principle, the women of the kvutza must be liberated from the routine of traditional female pursuits and children must be given an opportunity to develop personal autonomy. It must be stated that this extreme attitude rose primarily out of a lack of understanding of the problem. During the period of immaturity of the kvutza, the members attempted to replace experience with dogma and to impose a schematic system of human relations. But in a short time and with a little experience, it was realized that no blueprint could be made for family relations and that only sense and moderation could solve these difficulties.

Actually, under the primitive conditions prevalent in the early

kvutzot, communal tending and education of children was not merely advantageous; it was imperative. None of the communities could afford to make all of their buildings really habitable for children. At most, they could build one really good building to house a children's community. The sanitation one could attain in tents or shacks was negligible. Not only altruistic wishes dictated the course eventually taken. The objective circumstances played a substantial part. Even parents who opposed separation in principle wanted their children to be where they could best be cared for.

The actual significance and practicability of this system of communal training was rightly understood by the people who created and introduced it only after it began to work. It proved of really great benefit to parents and children alike. Unlike the women of the individualist settlements who have the double duty of mother and farm-worker, mothers in the kvutzot are not so burdened and



Children at Play in the Collective Settlement of Ain-Harod.

are hence calmer and better balanced. Since they are not tense and irritable, they are better able to meet their children in the evening with an ease unmatched in any other social atmosphere. Very young children are put to bed by their parents and the family hour inevitably becomes, for both parents and children, a bright symbol. Parents come to their children after a whole day's separation and the children see their parents when the impressions of the day are being digested. The parent-child relationship has not been weakened. It has been strengthened and purified. There are cases where divorced parents meet nightly at the bedside of their children and the child is never aware of the rift. Thus the child is protected from adult cataclysms which he cannot understand.

Naturally, as the child grows older he comes into more frequent contact with his parents. Occasionally he is taken to the parents' quarters and he begins to enter into the family relationship as a frequent participant rather than as a guest. Needless to say, parents when on vacation or travelling are permitted to take their children with them. The experience of many years has brought a truer understanding of the needs of the child as well as a greater generosity toward the needs and the longings of the parents.

At the age of six children are taken from the nursery and transferred to the educational institution known as the Children's Community. Here they remain until adolescence. The children's community combines characteristics of school and community. It developed empirically, being guided only by the principle of kvutza as a goal toward which the children were to be directed. For this reason it was necessary that the children's community concern itself with much more than mere education. It had to be a model of the cooperative community patterned after the kvutza itself. The children are, therefore, trained in social contact and in the practical work of managing and conducting a collective.

Teachers are equal members of the children's community. They participate in the deliberations of the group and in the various committees as individuals. They play a consultative role and are regarded by the youngsters as older, more experienced comrades rather than as teachers. The latter do not confine themselves to their pedagogic tasks. They must take part in all functions of the community. The relations, therefore, between pupil and teacher are devoid of the formality and constraint usually found in more orthodox schools. Cases of delinquency and insubordination are dealt with by a council of the more mature students.

Classes are not rigid age-groups since they are conducted according to the level of the pupils. Apart from basic subjects like mathematics, nature study, geography, most subjects are taught by the project method where the greatest amount of self-education can take place. Stress is placed upon subjects of practical importance

to the community with a great deal of attention being paid to the humanities and to the study of Jewish history, ethnology, geography, and to the Hebrew language. The primary objective is to make the school meet the future practical needs of the child. Therefore the Children's Community has miniature workshops, smithies, farms, etc. The study of natural science is based as much as possible on observation. The development of natural curiosity and alertness is put above academic excellence.

The kvutzot, naturally, prefer to take their teachers from among individuals who are themselves members of the collective since these must ultimately teach the collective ideal. The responsibility of these teachers is far greater than that of the ordinary pedagogue, for their charges are with them nearly the whole day. They must live with and for their students and must thoroughly know every aspect of communal living in theory and in practice. In addition they must understand how to adjust the children's community to the adult community so that the bridge may be smoothly traversed. In general, the pedagogic system is still pretty much in the trial-and-error stage and the teacher must be able to do his own experimentation.

Although most of the children's communities have their own farms and workshops, many of the older children are given an opportunity to work with the adults for several hours daily, particularly at times of greater labour demand. The kvutza does not want to segregate the children's community from the adult community. On the contrary, the kvutza is interested in seeing that the children become accustomed to its social life through direct contact by means of work and by encouraging friendly social connections. By this means the children attach themselves to the place and to the people against the day when they make the natural transition into fullfledged adult membership in the community.

Since they are brought up in a rural environment and since their contacts are almost all with working people, the natural sphere of the children is labour. They are spared the difficulties of long training which their parents were forced to undergo. Their training makes them technically skillful and gives them a fine sense for natural phenomena. They are not seldom quite aware of their superiority over their parents, with respect to technical skill and easy orientation and are, therefore, sometimes self-assertive, if not arrogant. This is somewhat stimulated by the fact that the society focuses a great deal of attention, energy and finances on the younger generation.

In the curriculum, special attention is paid to natural sciences, in line, purposely or intuitively, with the battle against the vices of the ghetto. The educational objective is to fit the children for an agricultural life and much time is devoted to the practical and

theoretical study of natural phenomena. This is done side by side with actual work in a model farming community and with the example of the cooperative before their eyes.

In close connection with the study of nature, the children study Palestinography. This term covers all phases of the country; its history, geography, biology, topography, population, sociology, etc. It is begun at the very outset of the school career, largely through hikes, mountain-climbing, camping. This system of environmental education serves to bring the child en rapport with his country. Travel in Palestine is, of course, extremely interesting from the standpoint of Bible study. The Bible thus becomes a living book about Palestine instead of a mysterious listing of unintelligible names and obscure events.

In its government, the children's community is a replica of the cooperative itself. The highest governing body is the general meeting which alone can delegate powers. Self-government is a part of the routine of the children's lives and is as much taken for granted by them as parental authority is taken for granted outside the cooperative.

Students of the higher classes often meet separately in order to discuss important political and social issues with the teachers. Political and social alertness is looked upon with great favour. This is regarded as necessary in order to avoid narrowness of vision which would inevitably follow a program dedicated to the perfection of a small communal orbit. They are given opportunity for contact with large youth groups with wider social horizons. It is therefore not accidental that a large number join organizationally and ideologically well-knit youth organizations.

The connection of the older groups of the children's community with national youth movements, particularly with "Hanoar Haoved"*), is of great importance to the social, intellectual and emotional development of the adolescents. Most of these have known only the limited sphere of the kvutza and are, from a personal standpoint, far removed from the struggle for existence, unemployment, hunger and disappointments of individualist society. Being so well taken care of in the kvutza, their organizational tie-up with youth movements extending beyond the kvutza is their sole means of contact with the outside world. A year after graduation from the children's community, they are given leave to go outside the kvutza for a year in order to see the life outside and to compare it with the cooperative system. They are thus given an opportunity to re-examine their loyalty to the form of life for which they have been educated.

A constant close contact is maintained between the adults and

*) One of the youth movements of the General Federation of Jewish Labour.

the children's community. The adult personnel which works with the children is the primary link between the two communities. The parents who live in the adult community are another link. Beside these there is an educational committee, a consultative body which is extremely interested in strengthening the ties between the children and the adult community.

The kvutza regards the children as heirs of their pioneer values and it spares no effort to see that the children become true followers. The adult community recognizes that untoward events in the kvutza may have unpleasant repercussions in the children's community. On this account the kvutza is ruthless in its self-criticism whenever the problem seems to be connected with the children's community. Before the children's community had yet graduated any product of its educational theories, many feared that the children would be without the spiritual values and ideals of their parents. Because of this fear an unusual stress was laid upon the spiritual idea behind the material effort.

In reality, the adults feared a certain loss of the feeling of dedication which spurred them to endure and to create as a national-regenerative vanguard. They had been saturated with the suffering of Jewish generations and they had revolted against the anomalies of the Diaspora. Though they were obliged by the exigencies of construction to be overwhelmingly concerned with material things, they were well aware of the idealistic force behind what they were doing. Perhaps, they reasoned, the children, who find the kvutza a natural environment, will take the first result — the cooperative community — too much for granted and will lose sight of the great human ideals of their fathers and mothers. Perhaps they may become petty rationalists, with practical success as their primary objective. Perhaps security, satiety, and a certain material comfort will make them forget the values toward which the kvutza strives.

The complete accord between the youngsters who have already matured and the generation which bred them belies these misgivings and apprehensions. They have already given evidence that they are worthy followers of their parents. It is true to say that the kvutza has, so far, been spared the struggle between fathers and sons, the eternal phenomenon that seldom spares any generation.

HERITAGE.

In the first stages of development, every kvutza was so completely pre-occupied with its problems and tasks of upbuilding that people rarely found time or inclination to ponder over the reshaping and creation of national tradition. Even the custom of the Sabbath had to give way to the claims of necessity. Needless to say, the holidays, even those rife with national content, were neglected. As zealots, the pioneers burned behind them the bridges which connected them with the past. This was basically a contradiction since they were ideologically driven to preserve their national integrity which had begun to decay. Unable to accept the current historical values of Jewish life which was steeped in religious ritual, they had not yet developed the faculty of recasting those values and giving them a new life.

But very soon they were aware of a certain barrenness in their communal life and they began consciously to search for new forms and to revitalize old ritual with new meaning. The growth of a new generation also stimulated this feeling of emptiness. They began to fear that they were orphaning their children spiritually, culturally, and traditionally. First of all, it became clear that they must create a link between past Jewish history and the present. Therefore, all holidays whose ritual and implication were deeply rooted in the life of the Jewish nation when it formerly lived in Palestine began to be revived and were clad with contemporary meaning. They found it easiest to revive first those holidays which were deeply linked up with the rhythm of Palestinian nature. Pesach, (Passover) commemorating Jewish freedom and Palestinian spring; Shavuoth (Pentecost), the festival of the first fruits; Succoth (Feast of Tabernacles), the harvest celebration; these and other national and nature festivals were revived and properly celebrated. The Sabbath has recovered its original significance as a labourer's rest day. Many traditional values are now retained even though somewhat stripped of their ritual surface.

The kvutzot are far from being able to boast of overwhelming success as far as the re-evaluation of the old traditional celebrations are concerned, but a very conscious effort is being made. In the

last analysis, revival of heritage cannot be achieved by the hypodermic method of injections and artificial stimulants. Undoubtedly a system of tradition, beyond planning, will have to develop in the new generation. The holidays and festivals which are linked closely to the nature of the country and to the ideals of national liberation come closest to complete acceptance.

In addition to the reincarnation of the old nature festivals, there are the newer holidays connected with the men and events of the national renaissance movement. These holidays, intimately bound to the people by the actual memory of the events, are likely to become an integral part of the national heritage.

The Sabbath, as a tradition and as a social idea, is developing into its own right and is preserving a little of the mystic significance of the religious Sabbath. Festivals concerned with agriculture, water, and other natural phenomena are easily endowed with their old significance plus a very practical appreciation of their social import.

REPORT ON A VISIT TO THE COLLECTIVE SETTLEMENT OF TEL-JOSEPH.

(By a British Officer in the Middle East).

1. While in Palestine I had the opportunity of visiting a communal settlement. Before arriving in the country my knowledge of it and its problems was practically nil, and my opinions are expressed therefore, on the strength of this visit only. I am therefore not satisfied that my conclusions are based on sufficiently adequate data, but they may be regarded only as tentative opinions pending further information. Strangely enough, language has constituted very little barrier in questions asked, owing to the large number of people speaking English, although I believe that by the use of English alone, I have collected only the opinions of members who have artistic tendencies, whereas those of mechanical or mathematical leanings have been inarticulate as far as I have been concerned.

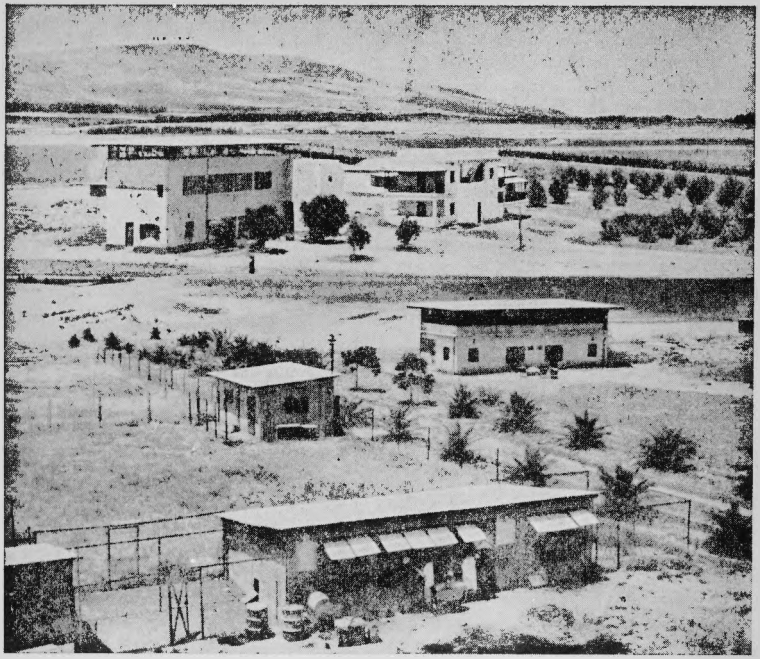
2. I originally intended to study agricultural methods, and although it very soon became obvious that this was too narrow a field it will be dealt with first. The settlement is worked as a mixed farm, with some areas irrigated and others not. As regards field cropping yields, by European standards they were average, but compared to local Arab cultivation, they were on average, 3 to 1. Members responsible for production of these crops point out that the comparatively low yield is primarily due to two causes: first, the extreme difficulty of controlling weeds, and secondly the fact that the most suitable types of plants, particularly grain, have not yet been discovered for the climate of Palestine. Manuring appears to be generous and excluding other factors an increase of yields in this settlement appears likely, on this ground alone. Dairying is again hampered by the fact that the most suitable cross breeds for Palestine remain to be discovered. The yield of milk is 40% better than the average for England, and the milk itself, in fat content and disease control, conforms to English Grade A standards. I regard this as an extraordinary result. The chief obstacle to further efforts in this direction appear to be that owing to the prevalence of cattle disease in local Arab herds all animals are stall-

fed, which must greatly increase operating costs. Dairying is carried out by the local *Tnuva* branch, and the conditions are first-class. Most of the machinery appears to be Danish, and standing in this dairy it is difficult to realize that one isn't in that country. Poultry, of which 5000 are kept, again suffer from the fact that the most suitable breed has not yet been discovered. Yield is 150 eggs per hen per year, which is creditable for an interim stage.

I understand that disease of fowls is a much more serious problem in Palestine than in England. During my stay there was an outbreak of fowl pox, in dealing with which the consultant veterinary surgeon for poultry was summoned from Jerusalem. I was able to have a long discussion with this authority and I am amazed at the number and variety of the experiments now proceeding in the various settlements. As regards the irrigation of land and results obtained, I can express no opinion, neither can I express an opinion on the citrus problem, as I have no previous experience. Vineyard work with grapes is not as intensive as in certain parts of Germany, but this is probably due to the lack of a specific demand for the particular type of vine which has caused the intensive German effort. (I am contrasting in particular the vineyards at Johannisberg on the Rhine).

As far as agricultural technique is concerned, I must draw the following conclusions. Firstly, that the communal settlement has a first-class knowledge of agriculture, and its members are already securing a very high yield. Secondly, the yield is being obtained without draining the resources of either the land or the animals, which are being steadily improved. Thirdly, the attacks on the special problems of cultivation in Palestine are being extensively carried on in every possible way. It is hence impossible to believe that the standard of yield will not rise steadily.

3. After about 2 days residence it became obvious that it was necessary to study much more than agriculture to be able to appreciate what was going on in front of my eyes. I am not going to describe in detail the method of living but these are my conclusions: Firstly, the food is very simple and plain, but without any possible doubt, it is first-class. In spite of considerable disorder in my own digestive tract, I enjoyed every meal I had, and put on weight besides. Quarters were plain and comfortable in spite of the fact that the collective has been greatly handicapped by the cost and difficulty of building in Palestine today. As far as the communal life is concerned, my fear that family relations would be upset thereby are completely unjustified, as practically every night I was able to become a part, as a guest, of some family group. There is no doubt of the feelings of children towards their parents, to whom they gravitate as soon as work has finished. The conclusions I have drawn are that a collective settlement offers a plain way of



A Collective Settlement in its Early Years.

life, but that in all necessities on the material side, the standard of life is undoubtedly high. I would give much to be certain that my own would never fall below this level.

4. Probably the most impressive thing to be seen in Tel-Joseph settlement is the care accorded to the children. In diet, education and general maintenance, the children are the healthiest I have ever seen. They are frank, open, and entirely healthy in their attitude to life. They are, in general, well behaved, but the errors which are committed are in sufficient number to assure me that the control is not too strict. The only slight criticism I have to offer is that children with mechanical leanings are not as well catered for in school as those of more artistic trends. This may be due to an unavoidable shortage of equipment.

5. Next, observations will be made as to the type of person who constitutes the membership. I never encountered in the whole of my stay a single instance of even the slightest discourtesy, petty-mindedness, or greed. I discovered that very far from culture having been weakened by the communal life, it had on the contrary become a living and vital force. The membership is only 600, and the available talents in singing, discussion, painting, dancing, and other pursuits are simply extraordinary. I already feel I can regard several members as personal friends, and nothing would please me more than to get an opportunity to return in my own home a little of the lavish hospitality I have received. Using a snobbish idiom — the members may have rough hands but they are all gentlemen.

6. I have, next, to state my conclusions as to the way of existence in the collective settlement. I have formed the opinion that their way of looking at their problems is in fact that of soldiers. A good soldier, it was said by Cromwell, is a man who knows what he is fighting for and loves what he knows. I have seen photographs of the land before the settlers arrived, and the stoutest hearts may well have quailed. The loss of strength at first owing to disease and bad living conditions must have been appalling. Only a community bound by a common belief and driven relentlessly by an ideal bigger than themselves, can possibly have survived. This attitude remains in the minds of the settlers. I do not know whether the collective settlement will be able to survive prosperity, but it will certainly achieve its objects, if it will train and produce a Jewish farming group, and if it will again convert Palestine into a state with an agricultural base, in spite of all difficulties with climate and land. It was possible, in fact, to draw a very close parallel between British troops facing the German defences at the Mareth Line and Jewish settlers facing the original Palestine conditions. In both cases the superb unity which both groups possess may be dissipated when the object has been attained. But in the case of the Jews in Palestine this problem is certainly not likely in any way to become immediate.

7. As regards the method of financing the various settlements, it would appear that the outside capital required has come from sources which can be classified into two groups. Firstly, long-term loans at ridiculously low or nominal rates (these loans come from the Keren Hayesod — Palestine Foundation Fund. The land of the settlement was leased to the settlers by the Keren Kayemeth Leisrael — Jewish National Fund), and secondly, short-term loans at what would appear in some cases to be ruinous conditions. It appears that the settlement of Tel-Joseph has steadily increased its indebtedness for many years, although the indebtedness per member shows a slight decline. The results of progressive farming also suggest that there has been capital appreciation of a good deal of

the investment. It is therefore considered that the expansion of the enterprise is the main cause of increased debts, and it would therefore seem obvious that the financial position would seem to be improving steadily, although if expansion for some cause were slowed up for a short period the balance-sheet could be markedly improved by the removal of the high-interest loans. It seems possible that eventually the collective settlement will regenerate its own capital by means of surplus when it reaches its ultimate number of members. Depreciation appears to be adequately carried out, and the true financial position appears to be much sounder on careful thought than would appear at first sight.

8. In reaching my final impressions of this settlement I must state that it is obvious that human relationships are not one-sided, and at the same time that I was seeking to obtain an understanding of the type of people with whom I was placed in contact, they were trying to do the same. It is my belief that the impression I have left has also been favourable, judging by the repeated offers of help of every sort, and further hospitality not only in Tel-Joseph but in every one of the settlements whose members I met. I am further basing this belief on the constant invitations to accompany people on every class of work and entertainment, frequently in their own quarters. This culminated in a memorial meeting held for a settlement member who had been killed in action. Surely if there had been any suspicion that I was in any way uncongenial I would not have been repeatedly invited to attend. Like other men I am susceptible to such implied flattery, and to feel that people whom one admires and esteems do not cherish any doubts as to one's own capabilities is very gratifying. I have been most impressed by the children, but the second most impressive thing is my own attitude on leaving. It was almost as if I was again leaving my home. I can hardly believe that 16 days ago I was unaware that Tel-Joseph existed.

9. I hope that war circumstances will enable me to continue my visits to Palestine, but next time I am coming to visit friends.

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